Mr. Tom Wicker
Austin Hill Farm
Rochester, VT 05767

8/9/93

Dear Mr. Wicker,

As I indicated last year in response to your letter about that most successful of the commercializers and exploiters of the JFK assassination, I have, I think, done much work since your 1965 kindness is urging Norton to publish my first book on the JFK assassination. You did not endorse the book itself, whatever you may have thought of the manuscript. Only that it should be published. When Norton asked me to revise the manuscript into what amounted to charging our government with the assassination, I refused. That was the last of more than a hundred unsuccessful eforts internationally to get the first book on the Warren Commission and the assassination published. It is what led me to self-publish.

Feltrinelli, the radical Italian publisher, after doing my first book, asked me to write a J'Accuse to cut and slash, as he put it. Of course, I did not.

Without any media attention, save as I gave reporters some of the more important documents I obtained by a dozen or so FOIA lawsuits before I could use them myself, I continued working, never seeking any personal attention.

Also without attention several of those lawsuits were precedental. One was actually cited in the legislative history of the 1974 FOIA amendments as requiring the amending of the investigatory files exemption. That is what opened FBI, CIA and similar files to FOIA access. Of all my many disappointments that there was no reporting of one lone man making the system work was perhaps the greatest.

From the first I have been in a centrist position on the assassination and its investigations, as you may recall from the Oliver State matter. It has been lonely there. But it is a loneliness I prefer.

I think it can also be described as a traditionalist position, as your letter to Norton also was traditional in our concepts.

It has had its disadvantages but I prefer it. I write you about one of those disadvantages. I'll get to it soon.

I'm past 80 now. I've been on borrowed time for close to two decades. I fought all those FOIA lawsuits after the first of the several illnesses that are not uncommonly fatal, and when I fought them I was broke and in debt. (My work had nothing to do with the end of my indebtedness.) In that litigation and from its yield, about a third of a million pages about a quarter of a million of which are in the JFK assassination, I acquired what several college professors will tell you is unique knowledge of the assassination and its investigations. That litigation also took the time of writing quite a few books for which I had what I needed to write them. In fact, what I wrote and filed in those lawsuits is the length of three or four large books, at least. As one of those professors, my dear friend David Wrone said about that litigation, I was writing history while it was happening.

It was during this litigation that I decided that the best service I could render

with what time remained for me would be to perfect the record for history to the degree possible for me. I became so limited in what I was able to do that I had little access to all those records because they are in our basement, I use the stairs with difficulty, and I may not stand still, as before file cabinets, for more than a few short moments.

As long as the angel who has been on my shoulder through quite a few surgeries two of which I was not expected to survive does not tire, I'll continue trying to perfect the historical record.

What those who do not understand what I believe is traditional American belief, or perhaps do not want to understand it, find unusual is that I give all others writing in the field unsupervised, free access to all I got under FOIA and to some, to my own work product, along with the unsupervised use of our copier. I do not believe that FOIA gives me any property right in those records and I do believe that my use of it made me surrogate for the people.

Some of those who have used these records when they knew that I knew they will write what I do not agree with regard me as some kind of nut.

To me, I am earning what Ecclesiastes refers to as out "portion." And at this stage of my life that means much to me.

I am the first member of my family ever born into freedom. Freedom became my right by the accident of where I waw born. As I matured I came to believe that I was born with a debt to pay, and through most of my adult life that has been in my mind and my life. Frost's words, promises to keep in the miles we go before we sleep.

In this sense I am gratified that, despite the difficulty and the cost of it, what I have done earns me my "portion" and with that I am content. It means what personal attention cannot mean.

Although these numerous illnesses are severely limiting, even making me type with the mill at the side, I have been able to resume writing without departing from the standard with which I began, strict factuality, no conspiracy theorizing and almost total restriction th the official evidence.

Two things made my return to writing possible ~~by~~ without reducing the indispensability of my standard. One was the ill-conceived JAMA campaign to support the Warren Report as its editor's reaction to the Stone commercialization. The other was the thoughtfulness of an old friend when after some years our friendship was resumed and he was a man of means.

JAMA gave me the skeleton I could flesh out and this dear friend paid a college student to help me when she could, mostly because she had healthy legs and a genuine willingness.

The cost and trouble I went to to make all my records accessible to others paid me off then. She could search and find for me, and refile.

Because I do not know how long I'll be able to write and because I have for years regarded as my primary obligation serving history, when I perceived what that JAMA flackery made possible I began to write what turned into a rather long book. Feeling time's

pressure as I did, my only outline was in my head and it changed as I wrote. When Wrone learned what I was doing he asked me to send him a few chapters. Historian that he is, he understood what I was doing and when he returned those chapters they had been retyped on his computer. This is how that rough draft of such dirty copy became a neat rough draft and it is the neat rough draft that will be published with slight editing that as of my last knowledge consistent mostly of cutting.

That the coming publication will be even more limited than my earlier self-publishing does not concern me as much as in my earlier days it would have. It will be published and thus will be a more accessible record for history than the countless pages that only some scholars may be interested in examining.

I had hoped for no more when I began writing it.

When this friend, a lawyer in publishing, visited me when I was writing it, he expressed an interest in it. He will copublish it with one of the small publishers he represents. I have not asked him which one. I also do not know when it will appear. I do know that when the editor finishes going over it it will be in page proof.

When in 1964 I first broached the subject to an agent I had, she quit me, telling me what I later learned was the unwelcome fact, that nobody in publishing would touch the subject other than as officialdom wanted it handled. The next six agents I approached would not touch the subject. So, I forgot about agents.

I interested the old Saturdey Evening Post in the book in 1965. That editor told me he preferred dealing with me through an agent. I told him I had none. He sent me to one of the better-known agents. When he heard the subject-matter of the book he said he feared he could not do it justice. That Post editor then sent me to another agent. He talked to me for quite some time, got and read the manuscript, then phoned me to say it was a fine book and he would represent it. Some weeks later he had changed his mind, saying it could not be used by a magazine (as later it was, on the magazine's initiative), but that he would be glad to represent it in England. I then had an English agent. During Watergate I learned that he was E. Howard Hunt's agent and that Hunt apparently used his office as a cover address, with a tie-line to Washington so he would appear to be in New York when he answered the phone in D.C. Since then I have made no effort to get an agent and since 1977 it has not been safe for me to drive outside of Frederick and I haven't. So, I have no agent who could have placed the book where it could have had the resources for promoting it my friend does not have.

While like others I would welcome the normal book promotions as promotions, that is not my major interest now. Not at my age and with my health problems.

I have written what I regard as a tough book. Wrone, the historian, says it is "unprecedented". I think it should be known particularly to the media. In part this is because of its assassination and assassination-investigation content.

While I have been writing about the assassination and its investigations, the thrust

of my work is that in that time of great crisis and since then all the basic institutions of our society failed us. That is quite explicit in this coming book. I would like ~~in particular for~~ reporters and editors in particular to give that some thought with the case I make out, mostly through how I treat JAMA.

I would also like serious thought given to what the book proves, with documents I got in all that litigation, that as soon as Oswald was dead there was a de facto government conspiracy not to investigate the crime itself. The names are on the documents I use, from the FBI, DJ and the Lyndon Johnson Library.

(Where, by the way, if it interests you, oral histories that I think can make a worthwhile book are unused and available.)

The book also ~~makes our~~ a case for without alleging a military conspiracy. It does not say that conspiracy was to kill. I would prefer for that part to speak for itself. I do think it is worth serious attention.

With these explanations I get to the point mentioned above, to ask you if you would care to read a set of proofs when they are available.

Without any obligation on your part to do anything. That I hope you might want to is separate.

I remember that you wrote the foreword of the House assassins' report and that you may even recall that I was Crewdson's and Rawls' source on their stories critical of it. As I was for Lardner, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and for others.

To me that makes no difference, although I am aware that it can to you. Most of the people who use my files and who ask my help, including reporters, I know will write what I do not agree with. (not, of course, with such stories as those on that committee.)

One reason is that you are the only retired journalist ~~who~~ I know and who was ever interested in reading the manuscript of that first book.

Those from other countries did try to help. Louis Heren tried to get his London publisher to do that book. His assistant, Ian McDonald, became and remains a friend. When the printer who was to print that book copped out with the plates on the presses and I could not think what to do, it was Steve Barber who did that thinking for me while I drove from deep southeast to the Press building. When I got there he had telephone numbers for me and through the most reactionary of American publishers I got the printer who not only did but with overtime so it could appear on schedule because I had announced it. (As it happened, there was no interest in it then.)

When I had that student's help, by the way, she made a set of the documents I use in that book if any interests you. The book is so large I do not believe there can be any appendix, much as I'd like those documents to be as widely available as possible.

I forgot the ~~title~~ title. It is NEVER AGAIN! The subtitle is The Government JFK Assassination Conspiracy.

I've completed more than half of another book with the some objectives in mind, the historical record. The title is Inside the JFK Assassination Industry.

What finally decided me to report on those who are not my brethern is that there is going to be an initial hardback print of 50,000+ by a certifiable mental case in which he will, from what his publisher says, charge me and others with being a disinformation agent for the government and thus an accessory after the fact. What he has written me and others about me is much stronger as a defamation.

At least one other book, with a large first-print and extensive promotion, will be critical of those of us who are lumped together as "critics" but as I think you know, they are not my brethren. I do not know that it will attack me, personally.

In this new book I'm up to where I go into Garrison with some incredible and untold stories. My judgement with him was poor. I should not have believed his explanation of his excesses. But on balance it worked out OK because I was in a position to prevent what was even worse that he planned and his staff could not talk him out of. They asked my help. I did not try to talk him out of it. I just proceded to make it impossible for him and impossible for him not to recognize that.

Whether or not you'll feel like doing anything, even if you know in advance that you will not, if you'd like a set of proofs anyway, please let me know.

My apologies for taking so much of your time and thanks for taking it.

Sincerely

Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg

Apologies for my typing, too, but it cannot be any better.